the long, long summer hours, snatching only a few moments for the simple refreshment of little else but rice and tea, and a few whiffs at a pipe, without stepping off their block.

When the granite window-sills were laid, each having a central perpendicular stroke struck with a line wetted with muk suey (Indian ink,) and brought accurately to coincide with the centre of the window marked on the masonry below, and the jambs were set up, the bricklaying began. The face of the wall was kept exactly flush with the granite below, leaving not a quarter of an inch for plastering. The grey-headed—I mean grey-tailed, veterans of the trowel had never thought of this, and vociferated most fiercely when made to pull their work down by the foreman.

I was dumb-founded to see the plasterers treading on the heels of the bricklayers, and laying on the pricking-up coat as fast as the wall rose in height: being very thin, this plaster is not disturbed by the settling of the brickwork. Screeds were altogether rejected as wasteful; indeed the forming them would have been impossible, for to save scaffolding one part of the wall was always carried up nearly ten feet higher than others.

Achone was very troublesome about his instalments, which were paid at the merchant's treasury, on his presenting my certificates. He was to have one thousand dollars to begin with, a thousand when the foundations were in, and another when the first floor joists were laid. He had taken his contract so low, or ready money commanded such discount, that he quite led me a life.

One day, whilst the round spars were laying as bridging-joists upon some old masts as girders, that had already 'put a girdle round the earth' in the merchant service, Achone put the question: 'Can let my have thousand dallar now?' 'No, you must do some more work first.' 'My wantchee catchee thousant dallar first. Have got twenty-five piece carp'nter-man, forty piece coo-lee (labourer), thirty breck may-sun: suppose no got no moa-ney, no can give wage dat man:—you see—all dat stun foundation very large stun: eb'ry day I go out, dat coo-lee come talkee my—why no give moa-ny?—ebery day wantshee moa-ny, buy dat rice;' and in his agitation he inserted a great fan under his white jacket, and began to ventilate his spine most vigorously. 'Inside my heart werry sore, no can catch wage; all dat coo-lee man come round my ous, make *too* much barbry,—say.—Achone! Achone! You all same tief Achone! Talkee too much bad my.' 'Well, why don't you send to Canton and get more joists?' 'My *hab* sendee Cantun. *No* can buy spar, no got *moa-ny*. You gib me thousant dallar, my catchee dat Cheena spar werry soon.' And here Achone, overcome with sadness, lifted up his voice and wept. There is something remarkably touching in the sight of a strong, stout man shedding tears. 'I never,' as Corporal Trim says, 'in the longest march, had so great a mind to my dinner, as I had to cry with him for company.'

As soon as he was gone, I proceeded to the house of my employer to plead for him. 'Is Mr. S. in,' said I to a loitering, effeminate Chinese lad, with a smooth shaven head, after having doubtfully walked to and fro in the veranda, and knocked with very little effect at four or five sash-doors? 'He av go out, wat choo want-shee, you makee house pigeon?' I acknowledged the compliment to the profession with a nod to the youth, and went to meet Mr. S.

'Oh, Mr. ——,' said my employer, 'when *you* know the Chinamen so well as *I* do, you won't be so tender-hearted as you are now: why that scoundrel Achone, living as he does rent free in a mat shed on my premises, dirtier, and more meanly than his men, he's one of the richest Chinamen in the place! No, no, let all the joists be laid first: he's got his thousands of dollars out at fine interest, *I'll* take an oath.'

To return to the building: I had shown my greenness in placing the strong room for the dollars against an outer wall, accessible to housebreakers: this was altered. We were now working at the level of the first floor, where the sitting-rooms were to have fireplaces. To avoid corbelling, the joiners nailed a single floor-board close to the wall, and based the brick jamb upon it. Every means was employed to save bricks, the windows gaped inwards with splays, that placed the lintels in a critical position. The granite door-jambs had awkward projections left for pivots to work in, instead of proper hook and twist hinges. When the marble hearths came, quite an excavation had to be made in the round spars, which could not be trimmed, and ran their inflammable ends into the fireplace, and the hearth could not be got down flush with the floor. It was useless to remonstrate; Achone knew that Mr. S. was satisfied with the regular way of doing things.

Part of the first floor was to be a veranda, with Doric columns and entablature. I had profiles cut for the rough brickwork, which Achone vowed should be executed to a nicety, leaving three quarters of an inch for plastering everywhere. Unfortunately, I was compelled to leave the men to their own devices for a few days, and Achone to his opium pipe. When I came back—good heavens! what was the veranda like? The pillars were right in height, but the coupled columns were stuck together; the bases, two clumsy toruses, in form something between a turnip-radish and a pumpkin; the capital was a single meagre tile. After having the columns reconstructed, the stucco work began. All the fillets and squares leaned inwards, the soffit of the architrave cut an inch deep into the abaci, the triglyphs were pentaglyphs, the cornice the masons would not project more than the half of a 20-inch tile instead of nearly 2 feet (I got it done eventually with granite slabs). Instead of the plain blocking course designed, I found the industrious plasterers flourishing away in flowery enrichment, of a series of little piers, projecting from other slight projections, so that each division of the attic had six arrises, and the corresponding mitres in the moulding coping, to say nothing of intervening panels, all filled with elaborate designs. It seemed a sad pity to have to abolish all this exuberance, especially as the contractor never dreamed of an extra for it.

For the roof we had provided king post trusses; and when these were set up, the carpenters began to bed the hip pieces; four clumsy round pine logs—they were tied to nothing, had no square bearing anywhere—being just bedded in the brick walls, and the purlin spars rested on them. Upon these the tiles lay, bearing on battens rafterwise. The entablatures over the windows were great difficulties: in these the Chinese generally keep the return of the upper fillet within the width of the window dressings; and when I ordered the extra length, they ran all the members out alike. I corrected this by tracing the return of the bed-mould against the wall. Then they cut crown mould and all off to this mark, and had to insert bricks again to repair their mistake. Every morning some blunder stared me in the face. One day I found all the window outside architraves painted green to match the jalousies.

A large shed, shaggy with its thatch of dry leaves, close to the building, accommodated the joiners. Here they got up the sash doors, which are commonly used to both doorways and windows, to assist the ventilation, preparing the stiles on little forms, not more than six feet long, the bench sloping from about twenty-four inches to twelve in height. With a narrow plane, destitute of top iron, and worked with a cross handle, the workman sitting astride his work, it was wonderful to witness what true and smooth work they put out of hand. It appeared rather barbarous, indeed, for a man to be turning up his naked toe and holding a sash-bar with it on the bench, while he worked the moulding and rebate. They were not so *au fait* at fixing. To my dismay, I found the doors, two inch double-worked doors, hung with brass butts, before the floors were laid; there was no fear, to be sure, of the doors not shutting, as there was above half an inch clear of any possible floor board, and when the floors were down, there was little more cause for satisfaction: huge ragged-headed brads attached them to the round spars, that could not be termed joists, and where an inequality presented itself, a dull adze scrubbed off the raised edge.

Mitering the moulded architraves was always a difficulty; the bead had to be shaved down, and the faces curved at the intersections.

The carving was worse than the joiner's work. A console truss to a door cornice they incised in flat lines on a half-inch board, though shown the front and profile on paper; and when a deal block was got out, the carver played with it as a cat with a mouse, and I was obliged to hack it out myself by inches to show him the way. A model would have helped on matters much, for but few workmen could understand a drawing.

Long before the building was finished, all the joints of the panels of the doors and sash-door windows gaped wide, and let in streaks of the withering rays of the sun most provokingly. The cedar treads and risers of the stairs also showed seams most unseemly. We made a cylinder in the well-hole and chalked up the handrail pretty correctly. The greatest proof, perhaps, of want of civilization shewed itself in forming the access to the cellar in the staircase compartment, about 15 feet square. Instead of contriving the descent under the staircase, they boarded the whole floor before beginning to *build* the staircase, and sawed out a large square trap in the centre of the apartment to get at the cellar. For the balustrade to the veranda, which was to be of grey porcelain, they brought several stone bottle-like productions, glazed, which could be produced at about half a dollar each. I gave them a profile, which they executed with very round arrises.

As soon as the rooms were floored, the workmen, who had been roosting at night like fowls on little perch-like platforms in the roofs of the temporary workshops, brought their beds (little more than mats) into the house, and there some of them lay sprawling and fanning themselves through the day. This appeared much more innocent than an English mechanic's week's 'fuddle;' nevertheless, I said to Achone, 'Why do you let your men leave their work and smoke?' 'Cheenaman,' he replied, 'no all same Inglis-man. Spose Inglis carp'nter ten minest away from walk, stoppee he wage—Cheenaman no all same. Dat man (pointing to one) stun may-sun, to day he no got walk, to-morrow he catchee walk, nex day spose no got—spose rain come, he catchee lice (rice);' that is, in rainy weather, when they cannot work, there is an allowance of rice to the mechanics, who get about the third of a dollar wages per day, or sixteen pence; labourers about sevenpence half-penny.

Centre flowers of radiating acanthus leaves, were most patiently modelled against the ceilings of the best rooms, and in tolerable imitation of my drawings, but in a few days they cracked and fell to pieces, whilst the quaint sprigs, birds, and fishes, shaped by the plasterers out of their own heads, set beautifully hard; seeming to say, this is a land of old institutions: new fangled notions will not answer here.

At an early stage of the works one of the ground floor rooms was furnished thus: against the wall were some upright boards, about seven feet high, the upper part covered with orange paper, inscribed with black characters, and in some parts punched into rows of diamond-shaped apertures, and spangled with square spots of gold leaf, its surface further diversified with little bouquets of tinsel, fructifying most gloriously with red and green gems. A small table stood close to the boards: on it were two earthenware lampstands, a little blue and white teapot, some diminutive basins, a vessel containing a large green fruit, and some matches, or incense sticks, in stands.

This altar was in honour of Lu Parn, or Lao Parn, the 'opifer per orbem decor' of Chinese carpenters. His interesting biography was thus touched upon by Achone: 'He lib long time go, he werry cleb man,—savey all dat carp'nter pigeon (business), all dat stun walk, all same Inglis man (I bowed) savey make—all carp'nter man, all breck may-sun,

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